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TAGS: OREP AMGT ASEC AFIN KE

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED FOR CODEL NELSON
(JUNE 28-JULY 1, 2008)

REF: SECSTATE 62146

¶1. Embassy Nairobi grants country clearance and welcomes CODEL Nelson. Country clearance is granted subject to the actual security situation at the time of proposed travel. The embassy switchboard number is 254-20-363-6000 and the after-hours number is 254-20-363-6170. Control officer is Lorraine Wager, work International Voice Gateway (IVG) telephone number 8-871-6217, cell phone 254-734-600-402, email WagerLT@state.gov. Hotel accommodation has been arranged at the Intercontinental hotel at a cost of US\$199 inclusive of breakfast and taxes. The hotel telephone number is 254-20-32-00-000, and the hotel facsimile number is 254-20-32-00-030. Ms. Wager will meet the CODEL on arrival with Embassy motor pool transport to the hotel.

¶2. Security assessment:

- There is currently a travel warning in effect for Kenya, which states that "American Citizens should evaluate their personal security in light of continuing terrorist threats and the limited ability of the Kenyan authorities to detect and deter such acts." The U.S. Government continues to receive indications of terrorist threats in the region aimed at American and western interests, including civil aviation, and that the Kenyan government might not be able to prevent such attacks.

- Nairobi is designated a critical threat post for transnational threat and crime by the Department of State. The RSO is required to brief all TDY visitors staying more than two weeks are required to attend a security briefing by the RSO at the regularly scheduled security briefing at 9:00 a.m. on Thursdays. Personnel on official USG business are required to stay in RSO approved hotels. You may obtain the list from your sponsoring office.

- Violent crime in Nairobi is sharply rising. Carjacking, in order to commit an armed robbery, is the most common form of crime in Nairobi. In virtually every instance, carjackers use weapons to rob and carjack their victims. Most victims, if they are completely cooperative, are usually released unharmed, with their vehicles. However, victims are sometimes tied up and put in the back seat or trunk of their own car. Criminals who commit these crimes will not hesitate to shoot a victim who is the least bit uncooperative, or may appear to hesitate before complying with their assailant. The RSO recommends that if confronted with a criminal incident, victims acquiesce immediately and quietly. Put your hands where they can be seen and avert your eyes. Though this does not guarantee your personal safety it is more likely you will survive the incident.

- Street crime is particularly bad in downtown Nairobi and Uhuru Park and mission personnel are strongly urged to avoid the downtown area after dark. Throughout the country reports of group attacks and muggings are on the rise. Pickpockets and thieves carry out "snatch and run" crimes on city streets and near crowds. Large public functions are particularly vulnerable to rings of organized thieves. Visitors have found it safer not to carry valuables, but rather to store them in hotel safety deposit boxes or in room safes. The RSO

recommends leaving all important documents (passports, plane tickets, etc.) in a hotel safe and not wearing any jewelry on the street. In addition, visitors should avoid hanging a camera around their necks, handbags on the backs of chairs, carrying a protruding wallet, and carrying or showing large amounts of money in public.

- While traveling in vehicles, doors should be kept locked and windows rolled up. Highway bandits are active on roads leading to the border areas and some areas in the northeastern portion of the country require special RSO approval prior to travel.

- The Government of Kenya (and the Mission firearms policy) prohibit the importing and carrying of firearms except for U.S. law enforcement officers engaged in protective security or investigative duties.

¶3. Climate: Weather conditions in Nairobi are sunny and mild year-round with daily temperatures ranging between 50 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. In April and May, it rains frequently and daytime temperatures are lower. From June through September, dry, but often cloudy weather persists with cool nights. From October through November there is occasional rain, but most days are sunny and warm.

¶4. Health: Due to the high altitude, Nairobi is not a malarial area and malaria prophylaxis is not needed; but the risk of malaria outside Nairobi is significant. Therefore, if you are planning to travel outside Nairobi, particularly to areas below 3,500 feet elevation, it is advisable to begin using oral malarial medication before arrival and for four weeks following departure. In addition, every effort should be made to use insect repellents, proper clothing, and barriers which discourage/prevent mosquito bites. Travelers should also carry immunization records with valid yellow fever immunization as well as being current with other inoculations.

The embassy medical unit advises that local tap water is not potable. Bottled water is safe to drink and can be purchased in local hotels, restaurants and grocery stores. Individuals with sickle cell trait should carefully consider the altitude of this post. Short-term (TDY) assignments carry an added risk because of the lack of time for acclimatization. Dehydration and stress from exercise or illness compound the basic risks of high altitude. For more information about sickle cell trait, contact your health unit or the medical clearances section of the Office of Medical Services.

¶5. Money matters:

- Credit cards are accepted at major hotels and restaurants, with VISA and Mastercard being the cards of choice.

- The current rate of exchange is approximately 61 shillings to the US dollar.

¶6. Entry requirements: A visa to enter Kenya is mandatory. This applies to U.S. citizens arriving for any purpose and regardless of type of passport. Travelers may obtain a visa in advance at a Kenyan embassy or consulate. Alternatively, a visa can be obtained at the airport for a voucherable charge of 50 U.S. dollars, but lines may be long and processing time slow. Evidence of yellow fever immunization is usually requested upon entry to Kenya.

SLUTZ